

**Remarks**

In the Official Action, the examiner rejected claims 1, 7 and 12, and indicated the allowability of claims 2-6 and 8-11 if amended to incorporate the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicant respectfully requests that the examiner reconsider the rejection of claims 1, 7 and 12 based on the amendments and remarks herein. Allowance of claims 1 – 12 at an early date is requested.

Applicant has amended all claims in the application to eliminate the redundant use of “the said” wherever that occurs. In addition, claims 2 – 6 have been amended to remove the closed phrase “consists of” in the preamble to the open ended transition “comprises.”

In addition, claim 1 has been amended to clearly state that the Central Control Unit is configurable in hardware.

Claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Patent No. 4,245,309 to Kiefer in view of Patent No. 3,819,906 to Gould, Jr. Applicant respectfully traverses this ground for rejecting claim 1. The present invention introduces the novel concept of “changeable” hardware, as opposed to the fixed hardware of the cited prior art. The present invention provides generalized configurable hardware in addition to the programmable software features of standard microprocessors.

This feature is similar to the modifiable hardware concept used in field programmable gate arrays (FPGA) except that the present invention extends into both the analog and digital domains, while FPGA is limited to the digital domain only. The present invention is also distinguished from FPGA by virtue of its basic architecture, as opposed to the switching fabric and configurable logic block architecture of the FPGA.

The cited prior art also may be distinguished in that it only provides the configurability merely in terms of predefined user operations that are inputs to the “fixed” hardware or software of the implemented design. There is no alteration of the internal hardware/software of the control system itself at any point. On the other hand, the present invention involves the modification of the internal structure and interconnects of the hardware so as to introduce new functionality in addition to the user defined changes.

The Gould reference relates to a cooking appliance, while the Kiefer reference relates to a washing appliance. If the Gould reference were to be applied to a washing appliance it would require a complete redesign of the internal hardware and software. Neither reference disclose any means for adapting to different application needs without major modification in hardware and software. This is due to the fact that the hardware is not configurable even though it is implemented in conjunction with a microprocessor. Thus, there is neither a reason for one skilled in the art to combine these reference, nor do the references teach the present invention.

Therefore, the applicant respectfully requests that the examiner pass this application to allowance at an early date.

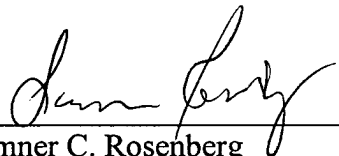


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Respectfully submitted,

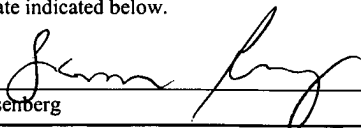
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